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and that I hoped the others had been

equally unfortunate. The thought of

My hopes were fulfilled. All came in

that night tired, hot, dirty and discour-

aged. Not one of the eight of us had

"Well," said Bagsby philosophically,

Accordingly next day we turned at

right angles to our former route and

followed up the bed of the canyon ten

or twelve mlles toward the distant

About 4 o'clock we camped. The

fiat was green. Little clumps of cedar

pushed out across it. The oaks had

given place to cottonwoods. We had

now to make acquaintance with new

The following morning we went pros-

for the dry washes in the sides of the

Accordingly I scrambled up

pecting again. My instructions were

among the bowlders in the nearest V

shaped ravine. I had hardly to look

at all. Behind a large bowlder lay a

little cuplike depression of stones in

which evidently had stood a recently

evaporated pool of water and which in

consequence was free from the usual

dusty rubble. In the interstices be-

tween the stones my eye caught a dull-

glitter. I fell on my knees, dug about

with the point of my bowie knife and

Although mightly tempted to stay

for more. I minded our agreement to

report promptly the first discovery and

the reel! First pop! Bagsby, old

sport, you're a wonder!" He started

for Bagsby, who promptly rushed for

"I'm going to kill the first lunatic I

Johnny laughed excitedly and turn-

"How did you guess what it was?"

"What!" I yelled. "Have you struck

"First shovel," said Johnny. "But

I thrust my three nuggets under his

"Say," broke in Buck Barry, "if you

All That Day I Shoveled and Panned.

fellows know where the whisky is hide

it, and hide it quick. If I see it I'll get

strolled from around the bushes. We

"See your fool nuggets and 'color'

and raise you this," drawled Yank.

And he hauled from his pocket the

very largest chunk of virgin gold it

has ever been my good fortune to be-

and scored, shaped a good deal like

an egg and nearly its size. One pound

and a tiny fraction that great nugget

balanced when we got around to

glorious day which the gods were

primming for us came Don Gaspar and

Vasquez, trailed by that long and sat-

saw us they waven their hats.

hold. It was irregular in shape, pitted

all burst out on them.

"Didn't. Just blundered on it."

ed back to thump me again.

so unearthed small nuggets aggregat-

ing probably a half ounce in weight.

"that's all right. We've just got to go

higher. Tomorrow we'll move up-

heat was too much for me.

raised a sign of color.

stream.'

main ranges

carried so far.

his long rifle.

you don't mean"-

asked.

We stopped that night near the road and at a wayside inn or roadhouse of logs kept by a most interesting man. He served us an excellent meal, including real eggs, and afterward joinus around the fire. He was an Italian, short, strongly built, with close urly bair, a rollicking, good natured face, and with tiny gold rings in his ears. Johnny and he did most of the talking, while we listened. No part of the civilized world seemed to have been unvisited by this pair. Johnny mentioned Paris. Our host added an intimate detail as to some little street. London appeared to be known to them from one end to the other; Berlin, Edinburgh, St. Petersburg even, and a host of other little fellows whose names I never knew before and cannot remember now. They wapped remicences of the streets, the restaurants and the waiters and proprietors thereof; the alleys and byways, the parks and little places. I knew in a reneral way that Johnny had done the grand tour, but the Italian with his gold earrings and his strong, brown, good humored peasant face puzzled me mpletely. How came he to be so traveled, so intimately traveled? He was no sailor. That I soon deter-

The two of them became thoroughly interested, but after a time the native courtesy of the Italian asserted itself. He evidently thought we might feel left out of it, though I think the others were, like myself, quite fascinated.
"You like music?" he smiled at us engagingly. "I getta my Italian fid-

He arose at our eager assent, pushed aside a blanket that screened off one end of the log cabin and produced his

Italian fiddle"—a hand organ!
At once the solution of the wide wandering among the many cities, the intimate knowledge of streets and of public places burst upon my compreension. I could see our bost looking upward, his strong white teeth flashing in an ingratiating, fascinating smile, his right arm revolving with the crank of his organ, his little brown monkey with the red coat and the anxious face clambering-

Next morning we crossed the overland trail and plunged into a country of pines, of high hills, of deep canyons and bold, rocky ridges. The open spaces we had left behind and the great heats. Water flowed in almost every ravine, and along its courses grew green grass and wild flowers.

> CHAPTER XV. The Strike.

E awoke the fourth morning to a bright day. The helmeted quail were calling. The bees were just beginning a sun warmed hum among the bushes. A languorous warmth hung in the air and a Sunday stillness. It was as though we awakened to a new world, untrodden by men, which was, indeed, a good deal the case. While we ate breakfast we discussed

our plans. The first necessity, of course, was to find out about gold. To that end we agreed to separate for the day, prospecting far and wide, Bagskept camp and an eye on the horses. He displayed little interest in the gold proposition, but insisted strongly that we carry both our rifles and revolvers. It would be difficult to describe the thrill of anticipation with which I set

off up the valley. The place was so new, so untouched, so absolutely unknown. The high ridges on either side frowned down austerely on the little meadows that smiled back quite unabashed. As I crossed the brown, dry meadow toward the river a covey of quail whirred away before me, lit and paced off at a great rate. Two big grouse roared from a thicket.

The river was a beautiful, clear stream, with green wavery water whirling darkly in pools or breaking white among the stones. As my shadow fell upon it I caught a glimpse of a big trout scurrying into the darkness beneath a bowlder. Picking my way ong the loose stones, I selected a like'y place on the bar and struck

home my pick. I have since repeated the sensations of that day-on a smaller scale, of course-in whipping untried trout waters, same early excitement and enthusiasm, same eager sustained persistence in face of failure, same incredulous slowing down, same ultimate scouragement, disbelief and disgust. All that day I shoveled and panned.

The early morning freshness soon dissipated. Between the high mountain walls the heat reflected. All the quail stood beneath the shade of bushes, their beaks half open, as though panting. The birds that had sung so sweetly in the early morning had somewhere sought repose. I could occasionally catch glimpses of our horses dozing under trees. Even the chirping insects were still. As far as I could make out I was the only living thing foolish enough to stay abroad and awake in that suffocating heat. The sweat dripped from me in streams. My eyes sched from the glare of the sun on the recks and the bleached grasses. Toward the close of the afternoon I congessed sneakingly to myself that I was

"Ah, also you have found the gold!" cried Don Gaspar, sensing immediately the significance of our presence. 'We too. It is of good color, there above by the bend." His eye widened as he saw what Yank held. "Madre de Dios!" he murmured. McNally, who had said and done

nothing, suddenly uttered a resounding whoop and stood on his hands. Missouri Jones, taking aim, spat carefully in the center of the fire, missing the dishpan by a calculated and accurate inch. "The country is just flowing with

Then we blew up. We hugged each

gold," he pronounced.

other, we pounded each other's backs, we emulated McNally's wild Irish whoops, finally we joined hands and danced around and around the remains of the fire, kicking up our heels absurdly. Bagsby, a leathery grin on his face, stood off one side. He still held his long barreled rifle, which he presented at who ever neared him. working day after day in that furnace "I tell you, look out!" he kept say

ing over and over. "I'm shootin' lunatics today, and apparently there's plenty game to cheose from." Although we did not immediately

run into the expected thousands, nor and the promise of that first glorious day of discovery quite fulfill itself, nevertheless our new diggings turned out to be very rich. We fell into routine, and the days and weeks slipped by. Bagsby and one companion went out every day to hunt or to fish. We took turns at a vacation in camp. Every night we "blew" our day's collection of sand, weighed the gold and packed it away. Our accumulations were getting to be very valuable.

For a month we lived this idyllic life quite unmolested and had gradually come to feel that we were so far out of the world that nothing would ever disturb us. The days seemed all alike, clear, sparkling, cloudless. It was my first experience with the California climate, and these things were a perpetual wonder to my New England

Then one day when I was camp keeper at the upper end of our long meadow a number of men emerged from the willows and besitated uncertainly. They were too far way to be plainly distinguishable, but I believed in taking no chances, so I fired my revolver to attract the attention of my companions. They looked up from their labor, saw the men and promptly came into camp.



"lan't it great?" he said. "Right off the

slowly in our direction. Indians. Their leader held before him ber of white feathers. As they approached us they began to leap and dance to the accompaniment of a weird rising and falling chant. They certaining, their round, black, stupid faces and their straight hair. Most of them rows, but three carried specimens of

might trade with us.

We then explained that we were re duced in ammunition and had little Don Gaspar here interpolated hasti-

the appearance of intending an affront. Buck Barry and Jones seemed instantly to accept this necessity. "Give them two or three of the saddle blankets," suggested Barry after a moment's thought. "We will have sev-

have to pad the saddles we can git Yank and McNally at this moment along with skins or something." We gave our visitors the blankets therefore. They seemed well pleased, arose and shortly made a primitive sort of a camp a short distance outside our stockade. We did no more washing that day. About 5 o'clock our hunters came in with the best meat of a blacktail deer. Bagsby listened attentively to our account of the interview. Then he took a hind quarter of the newly killed buck : d departed for the Indians' camp, where he stayed for

weighing it. And then to crown the an hous. (To Be Continued.)

Owing to the necessity of adjournurnine individual, Missouri Jones. The ing court cases whenever some law-Spaniards were outwardly calm, but yer wants to go fishing the protest their eyes snapped. As soon as they against the law's delays will never amount to anything.

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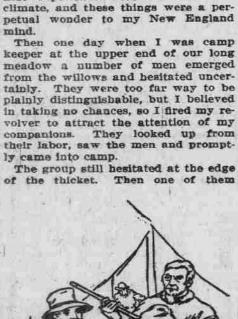
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reel! First pop!"

waved something white. We waved in return, whereupon they advanced As they neared we saw them to be a stick to which had been tied a numly did not look very formidable with their heterogeneous mixture of clothwere armed simply with bows and ar-

the long Spanish musket. The Indians said they wanted to

We replied that we saw nothing they In return they produced some roots and several small bags of pine nuts.

ly, saying that in his judgment it would be absolutely necessary that we made some sort of a present to avoid

eral light hosses going out, and if we

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